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ABSTRACT

A study examined needs of client groups--industry, enterprises, regions, and individuals--and their consequences for policy and practice within Australian vocational education and training (VET). The requirements for VET in the food processing and clerical industry sectors were examined in three regions across Australia. The study comprised five phases: identifying and accessing the fields; mapping the fields; identifying transformations and consequences for VET policy and practice; refining the analysis with key VET client groups; and finalizing the report. Key findings were that industry and enterprise informants shifted to a focus on enterprise needs that was more evident in the food processing sector; regional planning was commonly seen as a means to reconcile clients' needs; all client groups proposed a broader set of roles for VET in addressing their needs; diverse values existed across client groups regarding community service obligations; direct negotiation with VET providers would best address short- and long-term enterprise needs; the most likely motivation for additional expenditure on training by enterprises would result from organizational restructure, legislative changes, and evidence a productive outcome would result; and all groups reported needs for course flexibility, relevance, and currency; teacher competence; and nationally accredited courses. A change from a focus on industry to one on vocations was proposed. (Contains 13 references.) (YLB)

Meeting the demand

The **needs** of
vocational education
 and **training**
clients

a n o v e r v i e w

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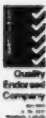


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1 Introduction

In recent times the need for vocational education and training (VET) provisions to be demand driven has been a clear policy goal of federal and State governments. This has led to demand-driven VET becoming common and widespread with market-based practices including the competitive tendering of courses occurring throughout Australia. This change has seen providers becoming increasingly responsive to particular client needs. However, this response is by no means a new phenomenon. Indeed, over the past decade VET provisions have largely focused on industry needs with providers being pressed to respond to industry demands, through government inspired and sponsored mechanisms. Hence, national competency standards and core curriculum were tightly linked to accreditation processes that mandated and regulated the provisions of VET in meeting industry demand.

However, there is now a shift occurring towards meeting the needs of enterprises. This is because national industry standards and core curriculum are seen as becoming increasingly redundant in the face of changes in the current political and industrial environment. Enterprises are emerging as a focus for making VET responsive to the demands of the economy. In addition, needs of regions and individuals are being acknowledged (Billett et al. 1997). Therefore, the needs of four defined key client groups—industry, enterprises, regions and individuals—have all to be accounted for in demand-side considerations. However, the needs of these client groups are neither necessarily consistent nor easily reconcilable.

The investigation

The investigation examined the needs of the four client groups and their consequences for policy and practice within VET. In addition, it mapped the changing relationships among the key client groups and considered the likely consequences of particular sets of interests dominating VET provisions. The investigation examined the requirements for VET within two industry sectors (food processing and clerical) in three regions (a metropolitan centre, a provincial centre and a remote rural centre) which involved four States.

Issues examined included:

- ❖ changing relationships between the key VET client groups
- ❖ the needs of key client groups
- ❖ how the needs of key client groups are being met by VET provisions
- ❖ changing concepts of VET
- ❖ reconciling the needs of these client groups through local (regional) planning for, and the implementation of, curriculum
- ❖ balancing needs within a market-based VET system
- ❖ the role of VET teachers in addressing the needs of client groups

This overview of *Meeting the demand: The needs of VET clients* comprises a set of assertions arising from the investigation and a brief overview of the rationale for the investigation and the means by which it was conducted. It also provides a summary of findings and recommendations for future policy and practice. The full report and the case studies are published as a separate document.

The aim of the program that funded this research was to be 'leading edge and visionary' (NCVER 1997). It is up to others to decide whether this work meets these criteria. What is set out here is an alternative approach to how the demands of key VET client groups might be met.

2 Setting the context: Changing relationships within VET's client groups

The relationships among the key VET client groups are changing. These changes foreshadow transformations in the foci of policy and practice within VET, which over the past decade has been dominated by addressing the needs of industry through industry-led VET provision. *Industry* here is defined as spokespersons for industry sectors as designated by government. The spokespersons comprise those bi-partite interests (employers and unions) and the agencies developed to manage the industry-led provisions (e.g. industry training advisory bodies, industry case-loaders within training systems). Arrangements to identify and meet this need were established in late 1980s and early 1990s by the Labor government (Dawkins 1988) and were sustained by a social compact between unions and employers in the 'Accord'. Tri-partite arrangements (government, employers and unions) were used to manage the industry-led provision of VET, premised on advice from peak 'industry' groups. Key goals for these groups included enhancing both the amount of and quality of industry training and securing greater commitment and sponsorship of VET provisions by enterprises functioning under the 'industry' umbrella.

Moreover, these provisions were intended to be characterised by national uniformity, being shaped by prescriptions of industry needs in the form of national competency standards and highly specified syllabi, which in most cases detailed the outcomes for and content of courses. Characterised as being corporatist, centralised and top-down, these tripartite arrangements privileged the views and interests of 'industry', yet inhibited contributions from enterprises, teachers and other interests. Mandation, regulation and even legislation were used in attempts to secure key government policy objectives associated with the sponsorship of and participation in VET by industry (enterprises), and also responsiveness of the publicly funded VET systems (Billett et al. 1997). Mandated approaches for both the process and outcomes of VET were advanced and regulations were used to manage the uniform implementation across States and Territories. Equally, legislative arrangements in the form of levies upon enterprises and provisions within industrial agreements were enacted to secure participation in VET.

However, it seems this approach failed to secure the important policy goals of enhancing both the level of participation in VET provision and the quality of that provision. Indeed, the sponsorship of, and participation by enterprises in, VET programs is declining both in the amount and duration (Callus 1994; Guthrie & Barnett 1996; Misko 1996; Office of Training and Further Education 1995, 1997). Attempts to centralise curriculum development provisions are held to have eroded its responsiveness and its applicability to the enterprises where this knowledge is deployed (Billett 1996; Hager 1997; Yeung, Woolcock & Sullivan 1996). Moreover, business rejected the legislated contributions of enterprises for the development of their own staff. Furthermore, when industrial arrangements were liberated from the mandate to include training provisions, few in industry felt compelled to continue providing training (Callus 1994; Guthrie & Barnett 1996; Misko 1996).

A shift from an industry to an enterprise focus

Now, with the end of the 'Accord' and the emergence of enterprise-based industrial arrangements, has come the erosion of national industrial awards. This has led to a weakening of national initiatives in VET such as core curriculum and national

occupational standards that were aimed at being universally applicable. Concurrently, the needs and demands of enterprises have emerged (particularly large enterprises), whose unique requirements are becoming a focus of curriculum initiatives and practice in VET.

Enterprises here are defined as the firms where individuals are employed; where entry-level training is usually sponsored and fee-for-service training can occur. From this investigation, it is evident that enterprises are now demanding two levels of customisation for their courses. Firstly, that the vocational knowledge learnt is only that required by the enterprise. Secondly, that this knowledge needs to be embedded in the organisational structures of the workplace. Aggregating these factors with the current reduction in the amount of enterprise-sponsored training and an emerging preference for short duration entry-level training by enterprises raises significant questions about the development and maintenance of a national base of skilled workers.

In this investigation, industry respondents expressed concerns about the erosion of national goals, the quality of provisions, and certification and strategic goals for the skill development for industry. That is, short-term outcomes were seen as now subjugating the long-term goals of maintaining a skilful workforce and also the aspirations of individuals who seek to realise their personal and professional goals through VET provisions.

Legitimacy of regional needs

Alongside the changing relationships between enterprises and industry are the emerging demands of regions to have their particular needs recognised and met in ways most suited to their requirements (Schofield 1996). *Regions* here are defined as areas that have particular combinations of enterprises, demographic and other factors that indicate particular VET needs. One feature of VET provision within the regions has been the forging of strategic relationships between key enterprises and local technical and further education (TAFE) institutes. The significance of these arrangements is that curriculum negotiations are local rather than centralised. This de-centring now seems possible with the erosion of the centralist approaches to VET facilitated by, and giving voice to, the particular needs of regions and the array of enterprises and interests that reside within them.

In this investigation it was found that regions had quite different needs in terms of the industry focus, range of enterprises, and backgrounds, and attributes of the individuals who accessed VET courses. Hence, the VET requirements of regions and communities are required to be understood more fully and met in ways commensurate with their needs, and probably planned for at a regional level. Centralised planning is unlikely to be sensitive enough to understand and account for the needs of regions (Schofield 1996). Market-based provision may only succeed in addressing some needs while exacerbating others. It was also found that the most successful means of addressing regional needs would be through co-ordination as neither the market-based approach nor consultation alone would be adequate.

Contributions and aspirations of individuals

Finally, individuals are now being acknowledged as making a significant contribution not only to their own development, but also to the nation's social and economic development (Chapman 1997). *Individuals* are defined here as those who engage with the VET system typically as independent clients of the VET system, and to a lesser degree as enterprise-sponsored participants. It is noteworthy at the time of a decline in commitment by enterprises to VET, that Australians as individuals are enrolling in higher level and longer duration VET courses in greater numbers, making a contribution that can be contrasted with that of enterprises (Billett et al. 1997).

It is for these individuals, who are the key participants in VET, that the voices of industry and enterprise need to be mediated to address those associated with the personal and professional goals of individuals. These include career path options that transcend the

specific employment in particular enterprises. It was found in the present study that there was a mismatch between the outcomes of VET programs desired by enterprises and those addressing individuals' needs.

Changing relationships, clients' needs and VET

Transforming relations and emerging demands represent significant challenges for policy and practice in the VET sector. It seems curriculum provisions can no longer be fashioned with national industry-based uniformity as their primary concern because enterprise, regional and individual needs cannot be accommodated under this basis. Indeed, the recent Training Packages approach adopted by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) emphasises this transformation, placing a clearly situated focus on the development of VET curriculum. In doing so, this initiative emphasises a fashioning of curriculum responses at the local level in ways that will be most suited to the needs of the particular enterprises or regions. This approach to curriculum development practice suggests a need to negotiate situational factors associated with enterprise, individual and regional needs. These needs were expressed in the findings on VET that featured their role in negotiating, developing, implementing and evaluating curriculum provision at the regional level. It also advances an important role for VET teachers in educational decision-making.

However, there are inherent problems with wholly enterprise-based or highly situational curriculum approaches that are likely to lead to more specialised and specific outcomes (Billett et al. 1997). There are consequences for the career pathways of individuals employed in enterprises as well as the skilfulness of the regional, State and national workforce. As evidenced in the United Kingdom, these problems are no more likely than when they are accompanied by high levels of market-based deregulation. Therefore, rather than a highly deregulated VET system which uses the market rather than planning processes, it seems necessary to understand how best to offer a platform for VET that embraces and reconciles the needs of these client groups. This platform should aim to balance market-based reforms, situational curriculum responses and strategic goals for the skilfulness of the individuals who comprise the nation's workforce. Such a view suggests a different basis for organising the national focus for VET. The change is from industry to occupations—a voice that speaks on behalf of the occupational activities of the vocation, for enterprises who utilise that vocation, and those individuals who are seeking a vocational identity and career progression within a vocation.

Importantly, it is also suggested that a mature VET system should be founded on mutuality among the different needs of its client groups. This may seem a difficult goal but worth pursuing. The findings indicated that a simple shift from an 'industry' focus to an 'enterprise' focus is likely to:

- ❖ frustrate the needs of the three other client groups
- ❖ have long-term consequences on the amount of and quality of skilfulness
- ❖ probably exclude small and/or remote enterprises
- ❖ ignore, in particular, the significant contributions of the individuals who participate in and wish to realise their vocational aspirations through VET

The changing relationships and emerging key foci were used to frame the investigation. The investigation aimed to determine to what degree emerging relationships and changing roles, and their mutuality are valid and sustainable in seeking to enhance participation and sponsorship and improve the quality of curriculum practice within the nation's VET system in the next decade.

3 The investigation

The study comprised an investigation of two fields of vocational activity (food processing and clerical) in three regions across Australia in an attempt to capture the complex of factors influencing how best VET provisions can be implemented. As stated, the needs and requirements of the key VET client groups are the basis for these factors.

The key question used to guide the research design and analysis of the data was:

What are the policy and practice implications for VET arising from the changing relationships among industry, enterprises, communities and individuals?

Sub-questions were:

What are the likely changes in these relationships and how will this transform advice and planning for VET provision and influence curriculum practice in VET?

How will these changing relationships transform the role of national and State training authorities?

What shift in values is required for enterprises to participate voluntarily in VET provision at higher levels?

How best can curriculum development, implementation and evaluation processes be conceived for the emerging de-centred approach to VET?

How best can national and State-based goals for a skilled workforce be reconciled with the specific and specialised needs of enterprises?

What are the roles of vocational educators in responding to these emerging needs?

4 Overview of methodology

The investigation comprised five phases.

- Phase 1 – Identifying and accessing the fields
- Phase 2 – Mapping the fields
- Phase 3 – Identifying transformations and consequences for VET policy and practice
- Phase 4 – Refining the analysis with key VET client groups
- Phase 5 – Finalising the report

Phase 1 – Identifying and accessing the fields

Initially, two sectors of vocational activity were identified. The choice of these sectors was guided by a need to capture both existing and emerging sectoral needs. To address this requirement, a sector with existing programs in the VET system (e.g. clerical work) and an emerging sector (e.g. food processing) were examined. In addition, regions that reflected diversity, but had some national applicability were identified. These comprised:

- ❖ a metropolitan or near metropolitan region
- ❖ a provincial centre
- ❖ a rural or provincial rural setting

Key informants from each client group were identified and contacted within the three regions. To facilitate the process of data gathering, the investigation required support within the three regions. Hence, regional co-ordinators were established for each region to facilitate the gathering and refining of data.

Phase 2 – Mapping the fields

Interviews and focus groups were used to gather data from representatives of key client groups in each of the three regions. Interviews, which enhanced the validity of the verbal data, were used for enterprise, industry and regional informants. Focus groups were used also with informants representing prospective, current and past students, as were surveys. These questions focused on the needs of each group and relationships with the needs of other client groups. The interviews attempted to map an understanding of the client groups in the regions.

Phase 3 – Identifying transformations and consequences for VET policy and practice

An initial analysis of the data was undertaken and a set of issues, consequences, likely scenarios, and tentative recommendations generated in the form of case studies from each of the three regions. The analysis used the framework that has been advanced in the earlier study (Billett et al. 1997). Additional studies were drawn upon at this stage to inform the deliberations. In particular, the ANTA funded TAFE graduate destination

survey (GDS), was used to furnish data on the views of students who had attended TAFE institutes in the three regions.

Phase 4 – Refining the analysis with key VET client groups

The case studies developed in Phase 3 were returned to representatives of the key client groups in the three regions in order to gauge their responses and refine the findings. The refined case studies are retained as an appendix to the main report.

Phase 5 – Finalising the report

The main report was finalised based on the investigations. Key findings and assertions arising from the investigation have been summarised in this document.

5 Overview of key findings

Shift to an enterprise focus

Both industry and enterprise informants reported that a shift to a focus on enterprise needs had occurred or was occurring. This was more evident in the food processing than the clerical sector.

Concerns arising about this shift from enterprises included the need for it to:

- ❖ go further
- ❖ involve more negotiation with providers
- ❖ be enterprise driven
- ❖ retain national qualifications

Concerns by industry representatives included the:

- ❖ erosion of portable qualifications and industry goals
- ❖ specificity of course content and goals
- ❖ danger of fragmented curriculum
- ❖ potential for only short-term goals

However, there is little evidence either here or elsewhere that simply placing an emphasis on enterprises will enhance the amount of and quality of VET provisions. The evidence indicates that an enterprise-focused approach may result in:

- ❖ low levels of course completion
- ❖ enterprise-specific curricula
- ❖ individuals' career aspirations being frustrated
- ❖ strategic concerns associated with a skilled workforce not being addressed

Rather, it seems that facilitation and support, not market-based provisions, are required to assist enterprise with participation in VET and establishing a capacity to develop the skilfulness of workers in their workplaces.

VET planning: Regional co-ordination

Regional planning was commonly seen as a means to reconcile clients' needs. A set of factors was identified that needed to be accounted for in planning. It was determined that rather than consultation or sectoral interests (market forces), regional co-ordination was the most likely mechanism to provide a reconciliation between the needs of client groups. This would permit the local expertise in VET to become part of that process whilst avoiding the conflicts brought about by the need of providers to compete in the market place. In each region there were identifiable agencies which could be used as a platform for regional planning for VET.

Broader role for vocational educators

All client groups proposed a broader set of roles for vocational educators in addressing their needs. These roles are:

- ❖ consultant
- ❖ curriculum developer
- ❖ instructor
- ❖ advocate and supporter of learners
- ❖ policy developer

These roles go beyond those of being an implementer of curriculum developed by 'industry', which was seen as the role of educators under industry mandated arrangements. The roles of consultant and curriculum developer were tightly associated with addressing enterprises' needs. However, there were conflicts between being an advocate for enterprises, on the one hand, and individuals, on the other, that may not be readily reconcilable.

It is clear that VET teachers are required to play a wider, more diverse and complex role in meeting and reconciling the needs of the four client groups. While this role will place teachers in the forefront of curriculum decision-making and leadership, it will also present novel challenges about the nature of professional practice. It would seem that, more than ever, the preparedness of VET teachers is going to be fundamental to the quality of VET provisions.

Diverse values: Associated goals for, and provisions of, VET

In response to views about community service obligations (CSO)—the balance between these and the market, and lifelong learning—it was evident that diverse values exist across the client groups. Assumptions about VET as a CSO were challenged, as was the belief about lifelong learning being associated with an individual's personal development. Instead, many of the responses referred to associations between CSOs and economic development and between lifelong learning and individuals' need to maintain their skill currency. So, across the four client groups, diverse and sometimes contradictory values were evident. Moreover, some of those values suggest that assumptions about the rationale for VET may have changed in the need to meet economic imperatives.

Enterprise negotiation with providers

To best address short-term and long-term enterprise needs, it was proposed by enterprise informants that direct negotiation with VET providers is required. These negotiations should focus on providers developing an intimate knowledge of enterprise needs in order to customise curriculum. However, there was little recognition of the value of reciprocal arrangements that understand the provider constraints. Despite the claims for flexibility, enterprise needs of VET processes and outcomes tended to be quite rigid; they wanted them to suit their specific needs.

Additional enterprise expenditure on training

Enterprise representatives proposed the most likely motivation for additional expenditure on training by their enterprises would mainly result from:

- ❖ organisational restructure
- ❖ legislative/legislated changes

- ❖ evidence that a productive outcome would result

Changes to products or services were usually denied as a reason to enhance expenditure on training and up-skilling was held to be only required for wholesale change. Many enterprises reported little in the way of long-term strategic planning in the development of their workforce. Those most likely to have strategic planning in place were in developmental phases of some kind.

Variables with regional needs identified

A complex of factors was evident as variables that made each region's needs different. These variables and their implications for VET are depicted in table 1.

Table 1: Variables within regions and consequences for VET

Variables	Consequence for VET
Type of industries (scope, specialisation)	Selection and priorities for courses, levels of certification, availability of course
Employment opportunities (types, modes, scope)	Integrated—non integration of on- and off-job provisions, opportunities for entry-level training, duration of course, experiences in workplaces, demands of local enterprises
Educational provisions (scope, access, modes, relationships)	Availability, on or off campus mode, access to institutions, relationships between provisions
Demographic factors (age, ethnicity, language, educational achievement, size etc.)	Cohort qualities—readiness, need for support
Goals/needs (development, consolidation, variation diversity)	Focus of educational provisions
Regional structures/identity (visibility, opaqueness, identity)	Ability for local needs to be identified and responded to

Each of these variables has particular consequences for VET provisions in terms of the types of programs to be offered, the levels and specialisation of those programs, the types of students who will access these courses and under what circumstances.

Reconciling clients' needs

From a synthesis of the findings on the needs of the client groups, areas of commonality and difference were identifiable. Common responses across all groups were associated with the:

- ❖ flexibility, relevance and currency of courses
- ❖ competence of teachers
- ❖ need for nationally accredited courses

Commonality between client groups comprised:

- ❖ industry and students—need for appropriate infrastructure
- ❖ enterprises, community and students—meeting individual needs
- ❖ industry and communities—wider enterprise participation in VET, in particular by small business
- ❖ enterprises and community—improving business outcomes
- ❖ community and students—realising individuals' employment and career goals

Differences between client groups comprised:

- ❖ enterprises—want outcomes tightly aligned to their activities and goals (two levels of customisation)

- ❖ students—want outcomes that are associated with employment (but not so specific that they inhibit career advancement), movement to other enterprises or access to higher levels of education
- ❖ industry—want outcomes associated with adherence to national curriculum and enhancements in the amount of and quality of VET provisions
- ❖ regions—want outcomes associated with both enterprises' and individuals' progress

Enterprises are concerned with employability in their workplaces. Conversely, students want outcomes that transcend this specific goal and position them for careers rather than a specific job. Industry wants adherence to hard-negotiated national industry frameworks. Given the importance of goals in establishing curriculum reconciliation is required to address the needs of all clients.

Competition or collaboration

It seems the market-based approach to managing VET may address best the needs of large enterprises and metropolitan communities. Other interests may not prosper under these arrangements. Regional initiatives that emphasise mutuality of needs between clusters of small enterprises engaged in the same vocational practice is and may further be a basis for meeting the needs of small and remote enterprises in a market-based system.

TAFE as the key provider

An unintended outcome from this investigation was praise from all four client groups for the quality of TAFE provisions. The findings here suggest that rather than seeking to place more pressure on TAFE provisions they should be supported to play an enhanced and more valued role in VET provision. TAFE seemed central to the maintenance and development of VET in non-metropolitan regions in particular.

7 Towards a model reconciling client needs

There is a case for changing the overall basis for the national coherence of VET provision. It is suggested here that the change from a focus on industry to one on vocations is required.

There seem to be four reasons for considering this option:

- ❖ separation of curriculum practices from now defunct industrial classifications thereby removing these provisions from decision-makers whose interests are usually vested elsewhere (industrial relations), and which probably never served best the interests of VET
- ❖ provision of coherence for VET provisions through vocations which reflect skillfulness (vocational knowledge), individuals' aspirations (career pathways within a vocation) and enterprises (access to relevant vocations)
- ❖ enhancement of opportunities for collaborative and voluntary arrangements and associations which emphasise the importance of vocational activities (professional practice), rather than adherence to an industrial prescription mandated by legislation and regulation, which has failed to secure a commitment to VET
- ❖ provision of flexibility for the recognition of the same vocation within enterprises that either wholly or almost wholly comprise that occupation, or those where many occupations are required, each with their own specialisation

So, the change suggested here is to take VET from an industrial to a vocational environment. There is little evidence to suggest that embedding VET within the industrial relations environment has done much to advance the cause of VET and the needs of all client groups. Although, in earlier times the coercive measures of obligatory award provisions may have stimulated some initial commitment to VET, recent experience indicates that this interest has dissipated. It seems that mandation and regulation have failed to secure enterprise commitment to participation.

From this and the analysis of the findings it is proposed that the 'industry' (vocational) role in reconciling VET clients' needs can be fulfilled through the following types of contributions:

- ❖ a vocational (occupational) basis for organising VET curricula
- ❖ stranding negotiated at national and regional levels
- ❖ negotiation of non-specific educational intent (goals and aims)
- ❖ negotiation of occupationally appropriate content as a basis for choice
- ❖ facilitation and support for enterprises to participate in VET and/or organise it for their own workplace

Enterprises

Enterprises want VET programs that meet their needs specifically. Many of the enterprises hold this as a right and a benchmark against which VET provision is to be assessed.

It seems that enterprise needs can be addressed through the following in ways that also are reconcilable with the needs of individuals and industry (vocations). These means are:

- ❖ provision of occupationally-based strands that approximate vocational activities within enterprises
- ❖ the negotiation/refinement of both content and outcomes. If the occupational content is focused, but open to negotiation and the occupational intents permit the objectives to be addressed at the enterprise levels then this may permit their needs to be recognised. Moreover, processes of implementation favour instructional techniques likely to develop robust vocational knowledge
- ❖ support and facilitation for enterprises to participate in VET or develop a capacity to provide quality 'in-house' VET programs

Regions

The findings indicate that regions have different needs of VET. These needs are unlikely to be fully understood except by deliberately taking account of those needs, probably from within the region itself. From the findings, the requirement for a regional contribution to curriculum planning and development for regions needs include:

- ❖ local (regional) planning
- ❖ local facilitation of courses to address the needs of:
 - local enterprises
 - groups of enterprises
 - local VET providers
- ❖ tailoring of provisions to enterprise needs
- ❖ negotiation of content and refinement of outcomes

Students

Although the vast majority of students (prospective, current and past) reported engaging in VET for employment-related reasons, those reasons were usually more than just to gain employment. Often, students were able to identify strategic goals for their participation in VET.

From these data, individuals were identified as wanting accessible, flexible provisions that are relevant to enterprises, but have both goals and processes which permit their personal or vocational aspirations to be realised. Consequently, the requirements advanced here can be seen as follows. Individuals want:

- ❖ access to courses which retain national certification
- ❖ career pathways identified
- ❖ provisions which address local enterprise needs
- ❖ accessible and supportive teachers who address individual students' needs

The demands identified above have outlined a basis to organising curriculum that seeks to reconcile the needs of the four client groups. It is premised on a de-centring of interest that can be thought of as a shift away, rather than a separation, from the centre. In the form of provision of goals for courses, recommended content, national certification and processes for monitoring the standing of that certification, the centre, in the form of the client groups representing the vocation, remains influential. However, in this schema, more of the decision-making about the provision of VET is to occur at the regional level with either local providers or enterprises. These decisions include the refinement of intents and content likely to be applicable to that situation. Hence, much more of the provision is to be formulated at the regional level, in both enterprises or educational institutions.

Taken together, the needs are presented in table 2 and provide the means to address both the specific (and sometimes) short-term needs of enterprises with more strategic goals favoured by industry, regions and individuals.

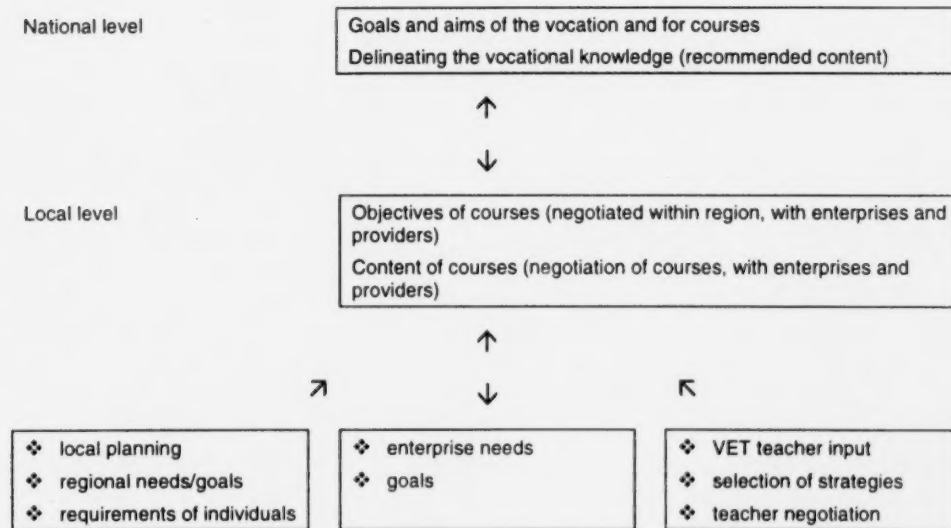
Table 2: Levels of engagement within VET curriculum

Level	Role and input
Vocation (Industry)	Identify vocations in the field of occupational activities (paid-work) Identify and endorse aims and goals (not objectives) for vocations Identify recommended core content Develop curriculum arrangements which fit the vocation (stranded arrangements) Manage national certification Identify career pathways and develop articulation pathways Manage external assessment
Enterprise	Negotiate with providers arrangements to suit enterprise needs Negotiate the detail of content and course objectives Access support and facilitation (especially small and/or remote enterprises) Support the completion of certificates Support instructional processes likely to secure robust learning outcomes
Regions	Local planning provisions Local support and facilitation for enterprises and groups of enterprises Negotiation of content and course objectives at the regional level (e.g. by TAFE institutes, private providers) Tailoring of strands to regional needs Determination of individual pathways
Individuals	Access to courses which are nationally accredited Career pathways identified Access to provisions that address local enterprise needs and accessible and supportive teachers who address individual students' needs.

This table suggests that the key curriculum decisions are to be made at both the national and regional level. However, in contrast to the previous industry-led approach much more legitimate and endorsed negotiation is to occur at the local level, with input from local planning and enterprises being assisted by the VET teachers who will have the responsibility to implement what has been decided.

Figure 1 depicts the curriculum development process that aims to address these needs. At the national level, broad statements of intent are identified for the vocation, as are recommended content. Whereas the statements of intent are refined further in the form of objectives at the local level, the suitability of content is also negotiated. Considerations about how best this content can be taught and learnt and in what circumstances (combinations of on-the-job and off-the-job) are also important. At this level, compensatory measures can be implemented to enrich experiences that will be inadequate in either the educational institution or the workplace. Equally, at this level, the knowledge that is required but is difficult to learn can be identified, and appropriate strategies adopted for learners to secure this knowledge.

Figure 1: Reconciling needs within VET



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